

**SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
FIRST DAY
JANUARY 2, 2003**

THE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING WAS HELD AT THE
WILLIAM H. ROGERS LEGISLATURE BUILDING
IN THE ROSE Y. CARACAPPA LEGISLATIVE AUDITORIUM,
725 VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY, SMITHTOWN, NEW YORK

MINUTES TAKEN BY
ALISON MAHONEY - COURT STENOGRAPHER

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[THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 2:06 P.M.]

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
Henry, roll call.

(*Roll Called by Mr. Barton, Clerk*)

LEG. CARACCILOLO:
(Not Present).

LEG. GULDI:
Here.

LEG. TOWLE:
Here.

LEG. CARACAPPA:
Here.

LEG. FISHER:
Here.

LEG. HALEY:
Here.

LEG. FOLEY:
Present.

LEG. LINDSAY:
Here.

LEG. FIELDS:
Here.

LEG. ALDEN:
Here.

LEG. CARPENTER:
Here.

LEG. CRECCA:
Here.

LEG. NOWICK:
Here.

LEG. BISHOP:
Here.

LEG. POSTAL:
Here.

LEG. BINDER:
Here.

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LEG. TONNA:
Here.

LEG. COOPER:
Here.

LEG. CARACCILO:
Here.

MR. BARTON:
18 present.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

Okay. Let's all rise for the Salute to the Flag led by Legislator Carpenter.

LEG. CARPENTER:

Thank you, Mr. Presiding Officer. And after the Pledge of Allegiance, we are going to have the Star Bangled Banner sung by Police Officer Jim Edmonds of the 3rd Precinct and the PPA -- PBA Trustee.

Salutation

LEG. CARPENTER:

Officer Edmonds?

Star Spangled Banner Sung by Officer James Edmonds

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

I'd ask everyone please to remain standing and I'd would like to introduce our Clergy for today, the President of the Islamic Association of Long Island, Nayyar Imam.

MR. IMAM:

Peace be with you. I'm going to recite the Chapter 30th Verses 95 of the Holy Book of Koran.

ISLAMIC PRAYER RECITED

Honorable Presiding Officer, Legislators and Ladies and Gentlemen, the {Sula} is about inclusion of all the religions. It says in the beginning {Allasa Pano Tala} which is the meaning of God in Arabic. It says that Jesus peace be upon him from Bethlehem; Moses, peace be upon him from Mt. Sinai; and Mohammad, peace be upon him from Mecca. Serve to all them. The human creation is the best creation he ever did. The human being is the most superior creation of God, but only when they follow the commandment of God and respect the fellow human being. Those who don't do that endure to the lowest part of humility, they're the bottom of the lowest and they don't respect the human being and they will be responsible. They will get punished as the believer of Muslim is that there is a day of judgment, there is a hell and there is a heaven. And whatever we do, I pray to {Allassa Pano Tala} that all of us should be at the highest level of humility. Amen. Thank you very much.

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ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

Thank you very much. Okay, I would like to please stay -- remain standing and I'd like to recognize Legislator Haley.

LEG. HALEY:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. As most of you know, the Honorable

Joel Lefkowitz passed away this past Monday. Judge Lefkowitz was a former County Court Judge, a District Court Judge and he was a former Supervisor of the Town of Brookhaven and also a former Town Councilman. And I remember him as the first elected official that really made an impression on me. So for those of you who aren't crazy about me being here it's because of Joel Lefkowitz and the impression he left. But I would ask everybody to give him and his family a few moments of silence. Thank you.

Moment of Silence Observed

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

Please be seated. I would like to call up County Clerk Ed Romaine and Judge Joan Genchi to administer the Oath of Office.

Oath of Office Administered to Edward P. Romaine,
Suffolk County Clerk, by Judge Joan Genchi

Applause

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

Okay.

MR. ROMAINE:

Before I sit down, I just want to wish all of the 18 Legislators who I have worked with for so many years a happy New Year. This is the seventh time, twice as Legislator, five times as County Clerk and one of the things that has made my job much easier and far more enjoyable is the cooperation of all 18 Legislators and I really want to wish you the best in 2003. I enjoyed working with you and look forward to working with you in the future. Thank you so much.

Applause

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

Okay, I would like to recognize the Honorable Joe Sawicki and Judge Jim Hudson.

Oath of Office Administered to Joseph Sawicki, Jr.,
Suffolk County Comptroller, by Judge James Hudson

Applause

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

I would next like to recognize the Honorable F.X. Doyle and Ed Romaine from the standpoint of swearing him in. Thank you.

Oath of Office Administered to Judge F.X. Doyle by
Suffolk County Clerk, Edward P. Romaine

Applause

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

I would like to start the meeting. I recognize Legislator Mike Caracciolo for purposes --

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Mr. Chairman, I believe at this point in today's agenda it has come time for the Legislature to take up its first order of official business and that is the election of the Presiding Officer of the Suffolk County Legislature. So I would like to take this opportunity -- I would like to take this opportunity and place your name in nomination for Presiding Officer of the Suffolk County Legislature. And at the same time, I would like to take leave from the horseshoe and go to the podium to make some brief remarks.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

Okay. It's my funeral, go ahead.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Legislature, esteemed colleagues and members of the public, public officials and all those present. I have known and worked with Paul J. Tonna for the past six years since my return to the Suffolk County Legislature. As many of you know, I had the distinct privilege of representing the 1st Legislative District from 1990 through 1993. And during that time and subsequently I had the pleasure of working with many different Legislators; at last count I believe -- and I see a few of them in the audience today, former colleagues and former Presiding Officer Sandra Bachety; Steve Englebright, New York State Assemblyman, and many, many others. But at last count I think I counted, there were at least 35 individuals that I've had the pleasure of serving with in this Legislative auditorium.

As I started to say that I have known and worked with Paul these past six years and have come to respect his independent judgment and all that he brings to this Legislative chamber. As each of you know, Paul and I have not always agreed on legislation or on legislative issues. The views, however, that he espouses, the arguments he makes and the positions that he advocates are always from the heart. I know that he views each discussion that takes place here as a debate on the merits of the legislation before us.

As the Presiding Officer, he has committed himself to a philosophy of good government which deals with the issues first, foremost and always on the merits. When necessary, he has stood up to those elsewhere and

defended this Legislative body, evidenced by the recent numerous overrides of the 2003 County Budget which was unanimously approved by this Legislative body. And also, when necessary, he worked with those elsewhere in mutual cooperation on the County Budget as was the case in the 2002 budget adoption process.

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Our debates here are often lively and they are open always to all who are present. We investigate wrongdoing wherever it takes us. Every idea gets a fair hearing. We continue our proud tradition of being an independent Legislative body second to none.

Working with Legislator Tonna on the Social Services Committee, I have come to admire him even more for his compassionate conservatism that is so important in terms of meeting the needs of those less fortunate than we. Paul has demonstrated this commitment not only as a legislative leader but on a personal basis wherein he and his wife Carol have established a trust fund for foster children. He's involved in the Christmas Time Toys for Homeless Children Initiative. His educational seminars to secure food stamps for hungry people who have never known they were eligible and his Long Island Sound Swimming Marathon that raised thousands of dollars for needy children.

Paul comes to the Legislature as a businessman and with a businessman's perspective and not as an individual from the body of law. He has made a breath of fresh area since he has -- he talks like one of us and mangles big words just like ordinary people often times do.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
Even little words.

LEG. CARACCILOLO:
And just like the great Roman General Cincinnatus, he is not a professional politician. At last year's Organizational Meeting, Paul said, and I quote, "Bipartisanship or coalition government does not mean that people stop thinking, stop adhering to ideals, stop believing in a philosophy or that they stifle debate. It does mean, however, that instead of blocking important legislation based on petty partisan squabbling, personal vindictiveness or direction from political party leaders, elected officials were together to achieve results, not simply make statements or engage in rhetoric," closed quote. I think those words tell us what we should do today.

Therefore, it is with great enthusiasm that I nominate Paul J. Tonna for Presiding Officer of the Suffolk County Legislature. Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
Thank you very much, Mr. Caracciolo.

APPLAUSE

LEG. CARPENTER:
Mr. Chairman?

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
I appreciate those very kind words.

LEG. CARPENTER:
Mr. Chairman?

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
Legislator Carpenter?

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LEG. CARPENTER:
I would like to second the nomination and second everything that Legislator Caracciolo said. The one thing I would just like to highlight, I think everyone to a person around this horseshoe can agree that Paul has functioned in his capacity from the heart and the fact that every idea does have an opportunity, legislation does have the opportunity to see the light of day. His phrase about we're not the mind police I've heard many times over, that people are individuals, they're individual Legislators. I have heard him refer to himself as the first among equals and he really believes that, that each member of this body is equal. And I think that's an important, very, very important trait in a Presiding Officer. So with that in mind, I am pleased to second the nomination.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
Thank you very much. I guess we go to a roll call.

LEG. CARACAPPA:
Don't you ask for any more nominations?

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
Oh, okay. Thanks. Are there any more nominations?

LEG. FISHER:
Yes, Mr. Chairman.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
Okay, Legislator Fisher. I recognize Legislator Fisher for the purpose of more nominations.

LEG. FISHER:
I would like to nominate Legislator Maxine Postal. Legislator Postal has certainly demonstrated the type of leadership that we look for here in the Legislature. Throughout this year when she has served as

Deputy Presiding Officer, she has been a leader who has represented herself with great dignity and decorum and has held the Legislative horseshoe meetings in that -- on that level of respect for the public, respect for our office and certainly respect for herself. Legislator Postal stands for all of those things that are so important to us as representatives of the people of Suffolk County. She's a truly caring individual who supports the programs that support the people of Suffolk County and it is my privilege and honor to nominate her today.

LEG. TOWLE:

Mr. Chairman, I will second the nomination.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

Thank you very much. I would turn to Counsel, just Robert's Rules of Orders are, you know, new to myself; I know Legislator Binder and Legal Counsel are experts. But we go through the first ones and then the second ones, right? How does that work?

MR. SABATINO:

The votes are considered in the order in which they were made. So the first vote would be on the first motion which was seconded and then

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the second vote, if it's necessary, would take place in sequence after that.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

Okay. Roll call.

(*Roll Called by Mr. Barton, Clerk*)

LEG. CARACCILOLO:

Yes.

LEG. CARPENTER:

Yes.

LEG. GULDI:

No.

LEG. TOWLE:

No.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

No.

LEG. FISHER:

Abstain.

LEG. HALEY:
Yes.

LEG. FOLEY:
Abstain.

LEG. LINDSAY:
Yes.

LEG. FIELDS:
Abstain.

LEG. ALDEN:
No.

LEG. CRECCA:
Yes.

LEG. NOWICK:
Yes.

LEG. BISHOP:
Yes.

LEG. POSTAL:
Abstain.

LEG. BINDER:
Abstain.

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P.O.. TONNA:
Yes.

LEG. COOPER:
Yes.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
Let me guess, nine.

MR. BARTON:
Nine.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
There we go. Roll call on Legislator Postal's nomination.

(*Roll Called by Mr. Barton, Clerk*)

LEG. FISHER:

Yes.

LEG. TOWLE:

Yes.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

No.

LEG. GULDI:

Yes.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Yes.

LEG. HALEY:

No.

LEG. FOLEY:

Yes.

LEG. LINDSAY:

No.

LEG. FIELDS:

Yes.

LEG. ALDEN:

Yes.

LEG. CARPENTER:

Abstain.

LEG. CRECCA:

No.

LEG. NOWICK:

No.

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LEG. BISHOP:

Abstain.

LEG. POSTAL:

Yes.

LEG. BINDER:

Yes.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

Abstain.

LEG. COOPER:
Abstain.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
I recognize Legislator Lindsay. Well, I guess we'll just get the vote.

MR. BARTON:
Nine.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
Okay. Legislator Lindsay?

LEG. LINDSAY:
Yeah, Mr. Chairman, I make a motion to recess this meeting till tomorrow morning.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
At what time, Sir?

LEG. CARACCIOLO:
Second.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
Second by Legislator Caracciolo. All in favor? Opposed?

LEG. GULDI:
On the motion.

LEG. BINDER:
On the motion.

LEG. CARACAPPA:
On the motion.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
Okay, hold it a second. First of all, let's just find out, is this a debatable motion?

LEG. BINDER:
Yes, it is.

MR. SABATINO:
Yes.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
Okay, great. Legislator Binder.

LEG. BINDER:

I wouldn't have asked otherwise.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

I know that, but I just thought I'd ask.

LEG. BINDER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for every -- I understand we can come back tomorrow morning, nine o'clock is fine. I want it on the record that by about 2, 2:30 that I will need to leave the building for religious observance. Shabbat comes early on Friday. So as we're going forward with this, that's all fine and good, but I cannot be here and I will leave the building at 2:30 under any circumstances.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

Thank you, Sir.

LEG. FOLEY:

Is that a promise?

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

Okay. Roll call.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

What time?

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:

Nine o'clock.

(*Roll Called by Mr. Barton, Clerk*)

LEG. LINDSAY:

Yes.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Yes.

LEG. GULDI:

No.

LEG. TOWLE:

No.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

No.

LEG. FISHER:

Yes.

LEG. HALEY:
Yes.

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LEG. FOLEY:
Yes.

LEG. FIELDS:
Pass.

LEG. ALDEN:
No.

LEG. CARPENTER:
Yes.

LEG. CRECCA:
Yes.

LEG. NOWICK:
Yes.

LEG. BISHOP:
Yes.

LEG. POSTAL:
Yes.

LEG. BINDER:
No.

LEG. TONNA:
Yes.

LEG. COOPER:
Yes.

LEG. FIELDS:
Yes.

ACTING CHAIR TONNA:
Okay, have a nice day.

MR. BARTON:
13-5. Please keep your folders, we won't have time in the morning to make up new ones. Just leave them there if you wish.

[THE MEETING WAS RECESSED AT 2:28 P.M.]

